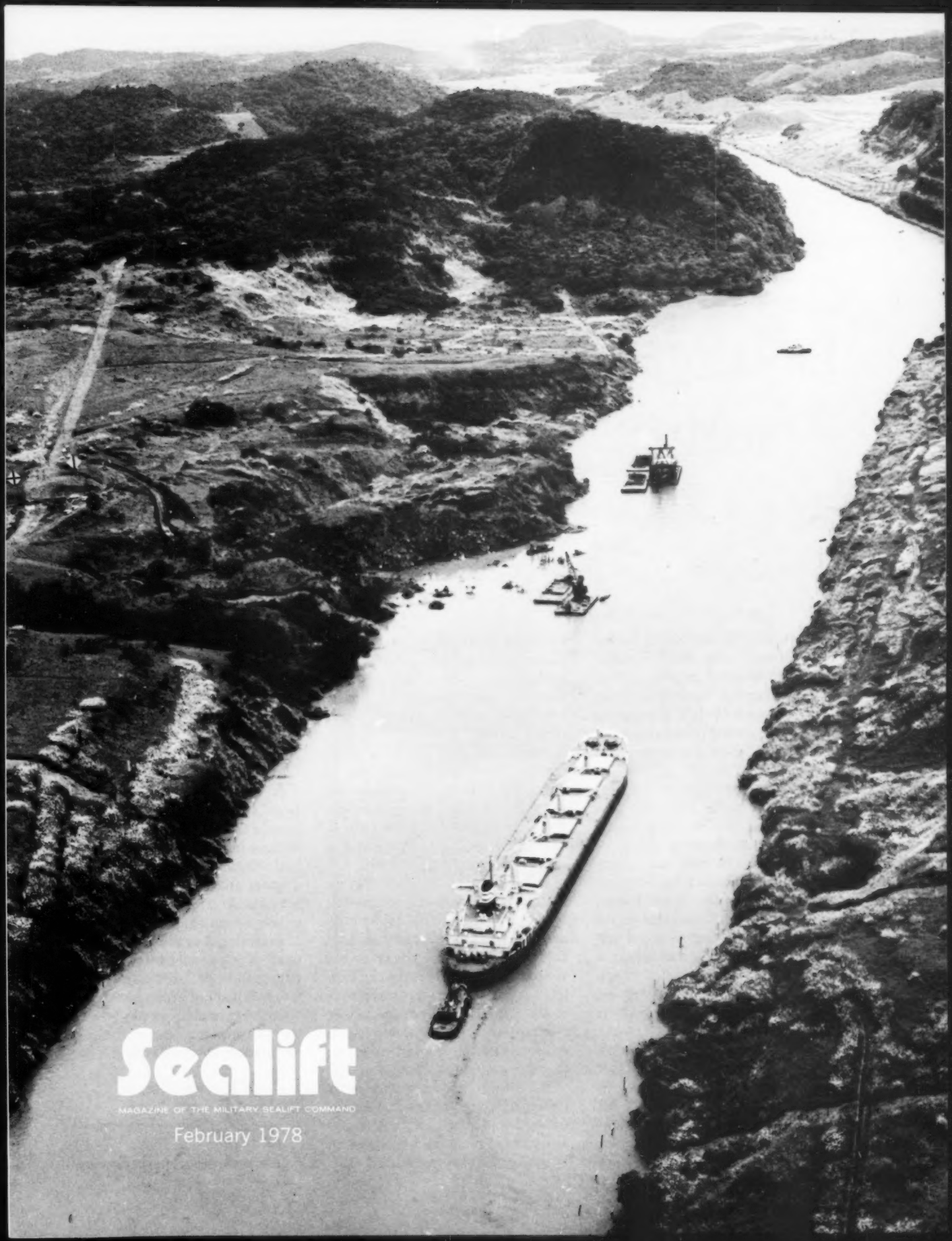

Sealift

MAGAZINE OF THE MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

February 1978

Loyalty, Dedication Are Alive and Well

I recently completed a swing through the Pacific which included visits to a number of our ships, offices and headquarters. Combined with an earlier European circuit, this trip has left me with certain observations and impressions which I want to share with you.

First and foremost is the affirmation that you, the MSC military-civilian team, are an exceptionally talented, hard working group of professionals. In this era where loyalty and dedication to the "company" are too often the exceptions, you constantly demonstrated to me that these qualities are alive and well in the command. What a pleasure it is to know that no matter how rough the going gets I can always rely on you to give well over a 100 per cent effort.

Second is the reinforcement after my "hands on" experience that you are indeed strung very thin in manpower resources in certain areas such as military detachments and port engineers.

Third is the clear understanding that if we are to continue to maintain the exceptionally high level of MSC civilian manpower quality, we must embark on a positive program to enhance the appeal and the rewards of this career.

Fourth, although a number of our nucleus fleet ships are first rate in appearance, material readiness and training, we must concentrate our resources even more effectively to ensure nothing but the very best in maintenance and repair.

Finally, I am convinced that we must work even harder to improve our team information flow both up and down. I am especially anxious that upper level management in our various headquarters listen carefully to what you at the working level have to say. It is all too easy to develop the ivory tower syndrome and to ignore or dismiss the sound, practical advice of the man on the scene.

With these and countless other impressions clearly in mind, I looked forward to our first area commanders' conference in mid-February in Washington. This meeting of MSC managers was designed to provide an open and candid forum for discussions of key MSC concerns and to assist me in blueprinting corrective actions.

The conference dealt in specifics and provided the basis for a comprehensive command action program of detailed long and short-term initiatives. A significant portion of the agenda focused on civilian personnel matters recently identified by our ad hoc committee. I will ensure that the minutes and results of this meeting are passed on to you as appropriate in subsequent communications.

In closing, I would like to pass on to all of you a well earned well done. I am proud to be associated with such a superb team of professionals and I continue to be impressed by how very well you meet the many challenges of our mission. Keep charging!

Commander, Military Sealift Command

COVER: Panama Canal dredge Cascadas (center) clears a fresh landslide in Culebra Reach. After 62 years Cascadas has joined the reserves. Story on page 11.

Rear Adm. John D. Johnson, Jr.
Commander, Military Sealift Command

Larry C. Manning
Legislative and Public Affairs Officer

Louis R. Granger
Public Affairs Officer

Louis Panarale
Editor

Henry L. Balloon
Pamela Martin
Graphics

Russ Egnor
Photo

Linda M. Quinones
Contributing Writer

Sealift

MAGAZINE OF THE MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

Vol. XXVIII No. 2 Washington, D.C. February 1978

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Fire Below

Crewman aboard USNS Mizar react like pros when fire threatens ship.

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Port of New Orleans

Shipping abounds in Louisiana thanks to a wealth of natural waterway resources.

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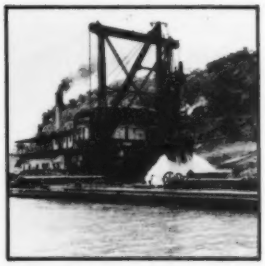

Canal Dredge

The Panama Canal's mighty dipper dredge is laid up after 62 years of service.

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Fire Aboard the Mizar, All Hands Came Through

Editor's Note: Nautical romantics talk of ships almost as if they were humans rather than the inanimate objects they actually are. If a favorite ship seems to go on and on, giving its crew little cause to complain, it is not because "she" has character of its own, but because the ship has been well maintained and professionally operated.

If a ship has a spirit it is the crew that imparts that quality. Such a ship is the oceanographic research vessel USNS Mizar. According to its chief engineer Frank Wolden, Mizar came close to being lost during a fire last May.

The Mizar, under operational control of MSC, Pacific, was heading towards the Indian Ocean when a fire broke out in the engine room. In 21 minutes the fire was out, but during that relatively short period the ship could easily have joined the hundreds of less well run and maintained vessels already in Davy Jones' locker.

"All emergency systems worked or we could have lost the ship and possibly some lives," Wolden said.

Selwyn H. Graham, Jr., director of training at MSC, Pacific noted: "The carbon dioxide flooding systems worked as they were expected to do because Wolden and his department personnel kept them that way. This was a hard-fought battle won by a group of dedicated men who knew what they were doing."

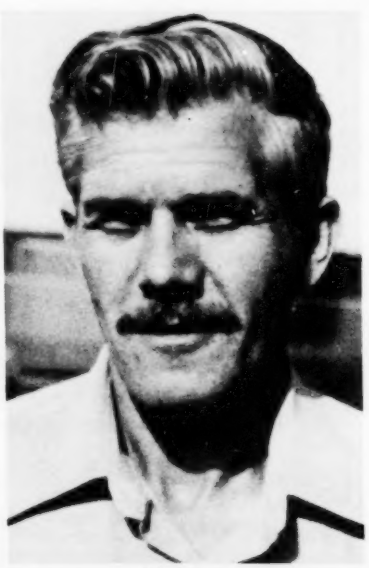
After the fire the ship was taken to Singapore for emergency repairs. Further repairs were made in Yokosuka, Japan during a previously scheduled shipyard period. The 21-minute fire caused a two-week delay in the ship's mission.

The following account by Wolden graphically describes a shipboard fire that could have been fatal to ship and crew, except for the skill and performance of crew members.

"The engineer on the 4 to 8 a.m. watch calls me every morning at 6 a.m. just in case I have slept in. On the Friday morning of the fire I was up early and writing letters in my office. My usual 6 a.m. call from the second engineer on watch revealed that the situation was normal down below, with nothing wrong. If there is anything wrong he tells me when he calls.

"I was just finishing my letter when the general alarm started ringing. I jumped up and ran out of my office.

"My first thought was steering casualty."



Wolden

My first thought was 'steering casualty.' The alarms for steering and fire casualties start out the same.

"As I reached the ladderway going down to the main deck I could see

"What in hell's wrong?"

smoke pouring out around the entrance door of the upper level engine room and realized that we had a fire on our hands, not a steering casualty.

"I was really running by this time. I knew the engine room was on fire and my first thought was the safety of the watch personnel. I met the second engineer right outside the watertight door at frame 80 just after he came out of the engine room.

"I shouted, 'Where's the oiler?' to the second engineer who told me he was on the main deck. I asked the engineer, 'What the hell's wrong?' and he answered there was a real bad fire in the after end of the engine room.

"I could see activity around the damage control locker where people were putting on oxygen breathing apparatus and rigging fire gear. We cracked the watertight door open and heavy black smoke poured out. I could tell right away that it was the lube oil burning with the paint. Definitely not fuel oil. Marine diesel oil has entirely different characteristics.

"The engineering plant was still operating but I could feel the ship

"We cracked the watertight door open and heavy black smoke poured out."

USNS Mizar could have sunk from an engine room fire were it not for the quick thinking and heroic action of the ship's crew and officers.

slowing down. By this time the master had stopped both drive motors from the bridge and we were steaming on control from the bridge.

"We opened the watertight door all the way and entered the engine room. I got up to the front of the main

"I hollered to the second, 'Get the hell out.'"

propulsion and ship's service switchboard but couldn't see a thing because of the dense smoke. I wanted to strip the board and kill all the electrical circuits but couldn't do it. The smoke was too thick and the heat was terrific.

"'Get the hell out,' I hollered to the second engineer. At the same time the master threw the automatic closing switch on the watertight doors. The second engineer made it out and I could feel the closing door squeezing me as I went through behind him.

"I fell down and it took me a couple of minutes to get my eyes and lungs cleared up. But I still had to secure the plant before the main and auxiliary salt water pumps burned up and the engines lost their cooling water. All engines were running which meant that all the fuel and lube lines were under pressure. And if they ruptured, oh God!

"It was amazing that the four generators were still running right along. Full electrical power was still up on the whole ship. I ran back to the main passageway and then to the upper level engine room entrance door where all the emergency shutdowns are located.

"Again I was stopped by heavy black smoke pouring out around the engine room door. I had to crawl on my hands and knees to get to the emergency shutdown trips in the thwartships passageway outside the engine room entrance door.

"I felt around and found the plastic covers protecting the trips, removed the covers and pulled all five trip handles. The plant immediately went down and the emergency generator came on line. I was amazed that those diesels were running in that inferno down there, right up to the time I tripped the switches. The first engineer had actuated the carbon dioxide flooding system about the same time I turned off the power.

"The fire started around 6:35 a.m. and was out 21 minutes later. All emergency systems operated or we would have lost this ship. Both fuel

"The fire was burning all around the starboard tank. If that tank had exploded, it would have been the end."

oil tanks are in the engine room.

"The fire was burning all around the starboard tank. Fortunately it was full to the top with fuel. This was lucky because when there is space inside the tank, fumes and gasses can form in the void and cause an explosion. If the tank had exploded it would have been the end. The second engineer had filled both tanks before the fire started.

"When I got back out on the main deck I couldn't do anything for a few minutes except cough and get my mind together.

"Only after services were restored did I start to make an assessment of

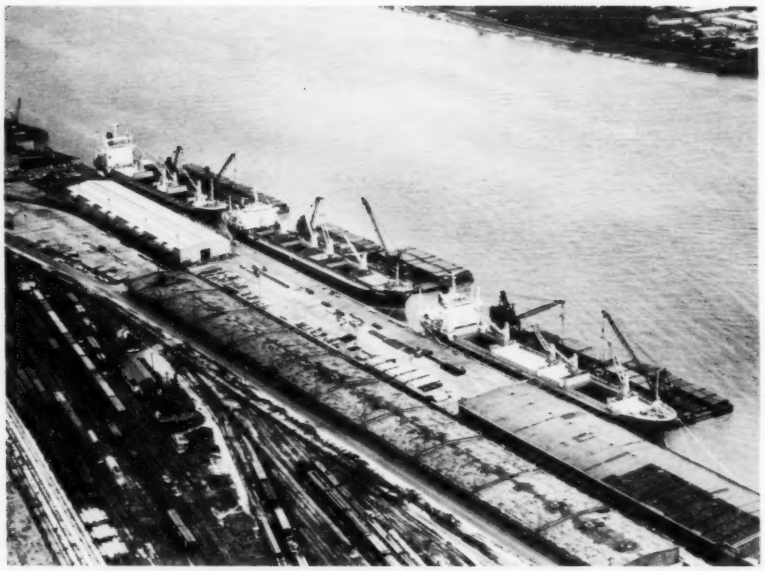
"Damage control personnel were really on the ball."

the fire damage and its cause. Our investigation showed that the fire started around the starboard main engine turbocharger.

"Everything was burned and charred around the after end of the starboard engine, straight up into the upper engine room. The area aft of the starboard turbocharger in the lower engine room showed clear evidence of an explosion.

"The turbocharger apparently backfired through its intake side, possibly its exhaust side as well. The fire started rapidly, without smoldering and there were no warning signs of a fire. I concluded that a turbocharger explosion or a ruptured fuel line caused the fire."

It did not destroy the ship and the lives of its crew because the former was well maintained, and the latter well trained. ⚓



Rail, truck and waterway transportation constantly feed a variety of cargoes to the Port of New Orleans.

Mother Nature Favors Port of New Orleans

By Edward S. Reed

The wealth of Louisiana's farmland brings the abundance of her good earth to a hungry world, the wealth of her forest provides an array of products sought everywhere, and the wealth of her mineral deposits is shared with an energy-starved populace.

Nowhere, though, is Louisiana more blessed by nature than in the wealth of her waters. Nature has provided this God-given resource in such plentitude as to defy comparison with practically any other similar-sized area of the globe.

The state's coastal waters support a commercial and sports fishery of bounteous proportion. Offshore waters cover a virtual Midas horde of petroleum, natural gas, salt and sulfur riches. Marshland, river, bayou, lake and pond harbor teeming populations of fish, shellfish, waterfowl and acquatic animals and provide the necessary atmospheric conditions to bring the gentle rain to field and forest throughout the state. Everywhere is a seemingly inexhaustible wellspring of fresh water for man's needs and for his manifold enterprises.

The most important use of these waters, however, is commerce. No other industry in Louisiana is more important economically than the shipping which flows on streams, estuaries and coastal waters and the international trade through port cities which provide harbors and shoreside facilities to accommodate this prodigious merchantry.

It's been that way for a long time, too, since a very large portion of our nation owes its development to transportation provided by waters intercrossing Louisiana. Chief among these waterways is the Mississippi River which has been our nation's principal streamway since the earliest days of Indian trade along its banks; since the 16th and 17th centuries when DeSoto, d'Iberville, Joliet and Marquette and LaSalle used the watercourse as an avenue of continental exploration; since the days of the Indian birchbark canoe, the raft, the flatboat, the keelboat of the early settler and trader; since the first side-stern paddlewheel steamboats carrying freight and passengers; since the introduction of the modern diesel powered towboats which revolutionized riverborne commerce.

Lying strategically at the bottom of this continent-deep ribbon of navigable streamflow is New Orleans, the continent's second leading seaport. Since its founding in 1718, it has been the principal deepwater outlet for the agricultural products, the raw materials and the manufactured goods of mid-America.

Just upriver from New Orleans is Baton Rouge, the

farthest inland deepwater port on the Gulf of Mexico. It has grown in stature until today it stands as the nation's fourth leading seaport.

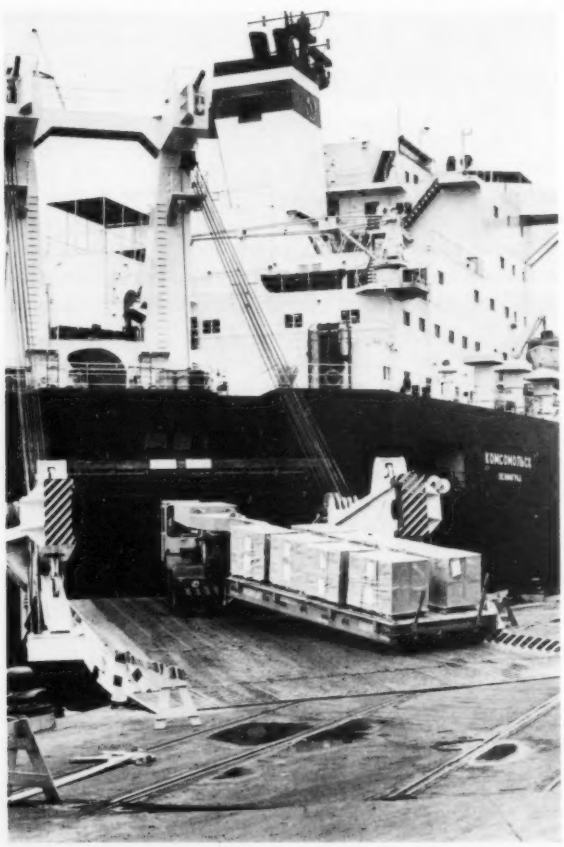
Past the doorsteps of these two Louisiana cities flow upwards of 42 percent of all the rainfall that falls east of the Rocky Mountains. In the 31 states and two Canadian provinces making up this third largest drainage basin in the world is a vast network of shallow-draft navigation channels, measuring some 19,000 miles in length.

The Mississippi River has its origin in Lake Itasca in Minnesota and flows into the Gulf of Mexico some 90 miles below New Orleans. In the lower Mississippi River the navigation channel is maintained at a low-water depth of 9 feet by 300 feet wide from Cairo, Ill. to Baton Rouge. From Baton Rouge to the Gulf, a deepwater ship channel of 40 feet is maintained.

An alternate ship route is provided from New Orleans to the Gulf of Mexico via the 76-mile Mississippi River—Gulf Outlet tidewater channel, which is maintained at 36-foot depth and 500 feet width.

The state's third deepwater seaport, Lake Charles, lies only 35 miles from the Gulf of Mexico and is growing rapidly as a speciality port for the handling of refined, petro-chemical and forestry products manufactured in the area.

The Gulf intracoastal waterway, with a 12-foot minimum depth, complements the Mississippi River systems by providing shallow-draft traffic access to all ports and connecting inland waterways between Florida and the Texas-Mexico border, a distance of more than 1,100 miles.



Cargo goes aboard a Soviet roll-on, roll-off ship at New Orleans. Ro-ro shipping is growing in importance at the Gulf port.

The hub of this system is that portion traversing the coastal region of Louisiana, and numerous access channels and harbors are maintained along the Louisiana coast to serve the ever-expanding offshore oil industry in the Gulf of Mexico, as well as the growing seafood and menhaden industries.

Traffic on this waterway has been expanding steadily over the years, and the 1976 tonnage increase from the previous year on the 266-mile Louisiana portion—the Mississippi to the Sabine rivers—was more than 2.3 million tons. Waterborne movements over the waterway's Louisiana portion in 1976—59.10 million tons—constituted more than half of the waterway's total tonnage figure of 99.08 million tons, and consisted almost entirely of non-oceangoing traffic.

Crude petroleum led the list of commodities moved over the Louisiana reach in 1976, accounting for 16.7 million tons, followed by residual fuel oil, 7.2 million tons; nonmetallic minerals, 4.6 million tons; marine shells, 4.3 million tons; in addition to basic chemicals and products, gasoline and distillate fuel oil.

On the 64.1 mile alternate route of the intracoastal waterway from Morgan City to Port Allen (the Port of Baton Rouge), tonnage increased by 1.9 million tons over that of 1975 to a total of 18.96 million tons. It consisted principally of residual fuel oil and nonmetallic minerals, basic chemicals and products and gasoline.

Finally, the state's rivers, bayous, creeks, lakes, sounds, bays, passes and canals provide hundreds of miles of navigable waterway, along which are located scores of public and private port and dock facilities. In all, there are a total of 36 official public port authorities which have been established by Louisiana legislative or constitutional statute to administer the ports and harbors within their jurisdiction.

Including the Mississippi River itself, along which are situated many modern and well-equipped harbors and ports within the Louisiana reach of the river, significant port, harbor and docking facilities are located on such principal state tributaries as the Atchafalaya, Ouachita, Red, Black, Calcasieu, Sabine, Boeuf, Tensas, Pearl, Mermentau, Vermilion, Chefuncte, Bogue Falaya, Amite, Tangipahoa, Tickfaw, Natalbany, Ponchatoula and Blood Rivers. The value of commerce generated by these facilities is considerable.

The Port of New Orleans became an official entity by an

Container cargoes make up more than a fourth of the port business.

act of the Louisiana legislature in 1896, the first port to be created in the state.

But the port was around for a good many years before the enabling legislation made her respectable. Almost since the city's founding there was a brisk one-way, downriver commerce with the rafts, keelboats and flatboats bringing livestock, flour, cheese, sugar, cotton and whiskey to the Crescent City. Then, along came Robert Fulton and his steamboat, making two-way traffic possible on the Mississippi and ushering in a new era in riverborne commerce.

It wasn't until 1812, though, that the first steamboat, the New Orleans, came calling at her namesake port. Business began picking up—21 steamboat arrivals in 1814, nearly 200 in 1820, more than 1,000 in 1835, nearly 3,500 by 1850. However, the heydey of steamboating on the Mississippi declined as the Civil War took its toll and the railroads emerged as the nation's principal freight carriers.

The turn of the century brought renewed riverine activity with the construction of some of the super sternwheeler towboats entering service. In 1907, for example, the Sprague set a still-standing record by pushing 60 coal barges totalling 67,307 tons into the port. Along about this time, the Federal government took an interest in maintaining the waterways, still further stimulating watercourse commerce, continuing until the years following the outbreak of World War II when the present era of high-capacity river use was born and still prospers.

Of course, New Orleans' preeminence as world-status seaport was not built just on the level of her river-generated cargo for, obviously, what comes in must go out. Therefore, as the Crescent City steadily increased the tonnages of cargo brought to her doorstep by steamboat and towboat, so also has there been steady increase in the tonnages placed in clipper and steamship bottoms to enter the commerce of the world.

The growth of tonnages shipped from the Port of New Orleans has been nothing short of spectacular. Beginning in 1920, the port shipped 2.1 million short tons, increasing to 12.7 million tons in the next 10 years. By 1940, this had risen to 19.8 million tons; to 35.1 million tons in 1950; 56.7 million tons in 1960; and at the beginning of this decade, the figure stood at 123.7 million tons. Just six years later—at the end of 1976—the port surpassed the 150-million-ton mark for the first time in history. The actual figure was 155.9 million tons, an unprecedented increase of 15.5 million tons over the previous year.

Broken down, the 1976 cargo figures show impressive gains in all but one category. Foreign exports from New Orleans at 41.6 million tons and barge receipts at 57.8 million tons were the two largest categories of movements. Exports were up 6.1 million tons from the previous year, while barge receipts were up by 7.7 million tons. Imports were 16.1 million tons, up 3.9 million tons;

coastwise shipments and receipts of 11.7 million tons and 2.3 million tons, respectively, each were down 300,000 tons; while local traffic accounted for 4.6 million tons, up 300,000 tons.

Exported grains—corn, wheat and soybeans—totaled 30.6 million tons, an increase of 11.7 million tons; the two major import items—crude petroleum and iron and steel plates and sheets—totaled 9.6 million tons; and principal coastwise shipments—coal and lignite, liquid sulfur, and refined petroleum products—totaled 9.9 million tons.

Incoming barge shipments last year of note included corn, wheat, soybeans, coal and lignite, crude and refined petroleum products and these shipments totaled 45.3 million tons. Crude and refined petroleum products and liquid sulphur, totaling 14.4 million tons, made up the principal outgoing barge shipments from the port in 1976.

The port's best export customers in 1976 were West Germany, which purchased 2.6 million short tons of goods, valued at $480 million; followed by Russia, 1.5 million short tons, $392 million; and Italy 2.8 million short tons, $368 million. Japan was the leading importer to the Port of New Orleans bringing in goods valued at $599 million; followed by Nigeria, with products worth $388 million; and West Germany, which shipped $181 million worth of goods through the port.

The Port of New Orleans calls itself The Total Port and, indeed, there appears to be evidence to justify this appellation.

In the area of cargo handling facilities, officials boast that no cargo is beyond the technical handling capacity of the Port of New Orleans and point to its deserved worldwide reputation for material handling efficiency.

There are about 25 miles of public and private wharves within the port, and its 101 cargo berths comprise nearly 60,000 feet of waterfront footage. Covered and open storage at dockside within the port totals nearly 15 million square feet. These facilities are served by 115 barge lines, 7 linehaul railroads and 22 interstate motor carriers in addition to an extensive public beltrailroad system which provides switching services.

The more than 4,500 vessels representing the 100 steamship lines which called at the port last year had a choice of three bodies of water on which to navigate—the Mississippi River, of course, which has a minimum width of 2,000 feet and a depth from 40 to 200 feet; the Inner-Harbor Navigation Canal, the port's tidewater area, up to 130 feet wide, a depth of 36 feet deep which shortens the distance between the port and the Gulf of Mexico by some 25 miles.

Three of the berths which have been set aside in the tidewater area of the port to accommodate containerized cargoes are some of the most modern and functional facilities of their type in the world. This France Road container terminal has been designed for nine berths and when completed will occupy 280 acres with abundant enclosed adjacent acreage for the marshaling of containers and project cargoes.

Container service is available also at a number of riverside wharves, such as the huge Henry Clay-Nashville Avenue wharf complex, which provides 3,500 feet of river frontage, large marshaling areas and crane-railfoundations; and the 3,100-foot Napoleon Avenue wharf, featuring a 108-foot-wide apron, adjacent concrete marshaling fields, crane-rail foundations and an open berth.

The world's newest innovation in shipping technique, the roll-on, roll-off vessel, has splendid accommodations, too, at the Port of New Orleans. Several of the river berths meet the specifications for handling the side loaders and angled ramp loaders, and stern ramped vessels can be accommodated at newly-constructed facilities on the Inner-Harbor Canal.

The Port of New Orleans has the twin distinction of being both the birthplace for barge-carrying ships and the world's capital for the operations of these vessels. The LASH and Seabee vessels calling at New Orleans utilize the world's most complete facilities and fleeting areas for these type ships and barges. About four-fifths of all LASH and Seabee vessels in world trade operate in and out of New Orleans.

As noted earlier, grains and beans—you name it, we ship it—is the largest category of export commodity through the Port of New Orleans. An almost never ending stream of barges and rail cars bring the wealth of mid-America's cropland to New Orleans to be stored in the eight high-capacity riverside grain elevators which have a

Barge to ship cargo transfer is common in New Orleans because of the vast network of waterways to the area.

Lining a curve in the Mississippi River, the port features more than 25 miles of wharves.

combined storage capacity of nearly 45.5 million bushels. The port's public grain elevator can store more than seven million bushels and transfer up to one million bushels of grain each day. Last year, the port handled $6.2 billion worth of grain exports, more than half of the nation's net agricultural exports.

More than two million tons of bulk cargo—coke, coal, alumina, sugar, bauxite—each year is handled by the public bulk terminal, situated in the tidewater area. This facility can accommodate three vessels simultaneously with the capability to transfer bulk cargo between ships and barges, railroad cars, trucks or open and covered storage areas. Additionally, a riverside bulk meal handling facility can process more than 2,400 tons of bulk meal daily.

The Total Port has virtually every facility to handle the most mundane to the most complex of cargoes. Heavy lift cranes have lift capacity of up to 600 tons; dockside refrigerated warehouses handle a variety of frozen foods and materials; abundant marshaling space is situated throughout the port area; a foreign trade zone does a flourishing business; stevedoring and longshoring services are unrivaled anywhere.

As to the future, the Port of New Orleans will continue its aggressive program of technological modernization which will assure its leading position among world seaports. The port has invested upwards of $140 million in the past 20 years in capital improvements, and is in its second year of a five-year improvement program which is funded at $91.5 million. In all, the port has earmarked major construction and improvement projects which will cost an estimated $400 million to be spent between now and the year 2000.

The Port of New Orleans is operated under the direction of a non-political, non-salaried board of commissioners appointed by the governor and its operations is administered by a salaried director and a staff of 700 employees. The Port has no taxing power and operates on revenue earned from the use of its facilities. ⚓

A native of New Orleans, Edward S. Reed was named executive port director and general manager of the Port of New Orleans on Oct. 1, 1970. He joined the dock board in 1961 after serving as vice president of Rickert and Laan, Inc., a rice milling and equipment importing firm in New Orleans.

Reed holds the degrees of Bachelor in Business Administration from Tulane University and Master of Business Administration from the Harvard Business School.

During World War II he served aboard the destroyer USS Picking and the water distilling tanker Abatan.

Photos by Panama Canal Company

Cascadas' big bucket gushes water as it works along the west bank of the Cucaracha Reach about 1960.

Panama Canal Dredge Laid Up After 62 Years of Service

By Vicki Boatwright

The Panama Canal was only a year old when the dipper dredge Cascadas went into service keeping the canal open and participating in widening projects.

For 62 years the formidable machine plied the waterway attacking earth slides and narrow mountainous areas so ships of the world's merchant and naval fleets could safely and easily transit the 50-mile canal linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Cascadas set records and participated in the most important and dramatic Canal projects. A reproduction of a painting of the dredge appears on the Canal Zone 13-cent postage stamp.

But like everything and everybody, its time has come for retirement. In November, Cascadas was placed in the canal's ready reserve fleet to provide backup for the new dipper dredge Rialto M. Christensen.

Constructed at Bucyrus Co., Port Richmond, N.Y., Cascadas was

In front of Contractor's Hill Cascadas widens Cucaracha Reach. At far right holes for explosives are drilled. Dynamite will break up material ahead of the dredge. The indentation behind the freighter is the site of the great Cucaracha slide which occurred during construction.

Cascadas is worked in front of Gold Hill in Culebra Reach a month before retirement. This dredging was part of a test to determine if deepening the canal could make more water available for operation of the locks, a project now under consideration.

Dirt is loaded onto a scow at the mouth of the Mandinga River in 1967. Graded land behind the dredge was later removed.

The new dredge Rialto Christensen undergoes trials near Gamboa. It is the largest dipper dredge in the world.

Dredges work along the east side of Gold Hill in Culebra Cut on Jan. 18, 1915 after a slide. The canal opened Aug. 15, 1914.

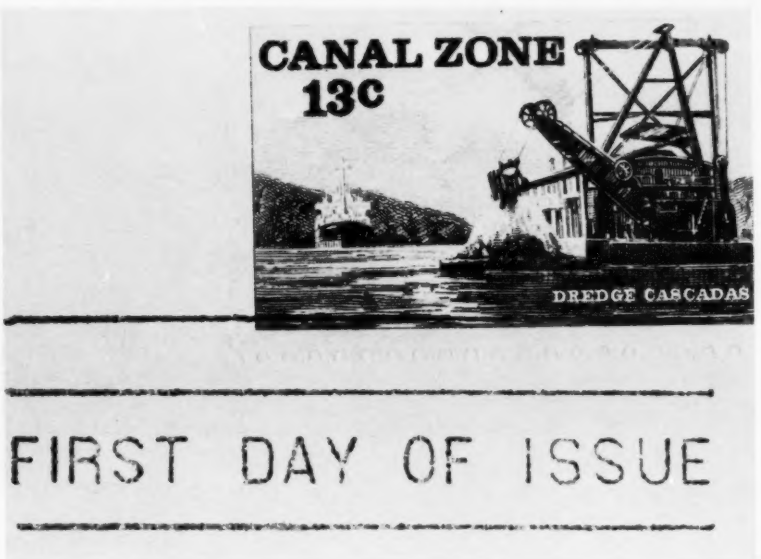
towed to Cristobal by the tug M.E. Luckenbach and taken through the canal to Gamboa where it was put into working order in little more than seven days.

In February 1916, four months after the dredge arrived in the Canal Zone, it made news by setting a world record for a day's dredging in Culebra Cut. In less than 24 hours on February 18 the Cascadas excavated 23,305 cubic yards of rock and earth that weighed approximately 35,000 tons, a rate of about 25 tons a minute.

The Cascadas also performed beyond expectations in regard to breakdowns. From the time the dredge was put into use it was continuously on the job in Culebra Cut until March 1916 when it was brought to the repair dock at Paraiso for renewal of the starboard spud.

During those 4½ months the Cascadas excavated 1,447,946 cubic yards of rock and earth and was delayed by breakdowns only 77 hours and 35 minutes, a mere 2.4 percent of its total working time. The original design included a spare boiler and a complete machine shop, both contributing factors in the dredge's exceptional performance.

The Cascadas was part of a work



Cascadas appears on Canal Zone 13-cent stamps.

Debris from a fresh landslide along Culebra Reach is removed by the Cascadas and the crane barge Goliath in October 1974. A bulk carrier heads south towards the Pacific side.

force that accomplished one of the major improvements to the canal, the widening of the 8.3-mile Gaillard Cut from 300 to 500 feet. The project spanned 15 years, from 1954 to 1969, and resulted in increased navigational safety and two-way traffic through the cut for nearly all types of ships.

After nearly 60 years of canal dredging, the Cascadas responded to a major slide at the original site of her commissioning. Shortly after midnight on Oct. 10, 1974 a portion of the east bank of Culebra Reach gave way and caused shoaling almost to the centerline of the canal, closing it to one lane of traffic.

It was estimated to be the largest slide since 1931 when the bank south of this area broke and closed the channel for two days.

Cascadas and the clamshell dredge Goliath were immediately sent to the slide area, removed 380,000 cubic yards of dirt and restored two-lane ship traffic.

Up to the end the crews of the Cascadas added to the dredge history of high productivity and infrequent breakdowns.

The design and construction, highly advanced for its day, and the dedication and competence of its crews over the years in operating and maintaining this mammoth floating steam shovel established a record which will be hard to surpass. ⚓

Vicki Boatwright is a writer-photographer for the Panama Canal information office. Born in Altoona, Pa., she grew up in the Canal Zone and studied journalism at the Canal Zone College. Boatwright has a B.A. degree in English Literature from the State University of New York. She teaches magazine editing at the Canal Zone College.

Tribbe shows Project Hope secretary Patricia Reese a letter notifying him he has been awarded a pension as a Spanish-American War veteran.

Spanish-American War Vet Recalls Navy Adventures

By Louis Panarale

William Tribbe was a lad of 13 in St. Louis, Mo. when news broke in the winter of 1898 that the battleship Maine was sunk after an explosion in Havana, Cuba harbor.

The incident sparked a war between the United States and Spain. "Remember the Maine" was the rallying cry for the Spanish-American War which the United States won in a little more than 100 days.

"The war really gave me the bug to join the Navy," said the trim white-haired Tribbe who now is 92 and lives in Los Angeles. Tribbe was too young to join during the war but fantasies of sailing aboard a man of war with its lofty white sails ran through his young mind.

The Navy recruiting slogan at the turn of the century was "Wooden Ships and Iron Men." It helped convince Tribbe to join the Navy. He signed up on Feb. 15, 1901—the third anniversary of the sinking of the Maine.

Tribbe's mother was not at all happy. Her 16-year-old boy was going to leave home for five years. But his father had served in the Navy during the Civil War and he supported his son.

Tribbe went to Newport, R.I. and trained for six months aboard the frigate Constellation, a vessel that George Washington authorized for construction in 1794. The Constellation is the oldest Navy ship in commission and is preserved at Baltimore, Md.

Tribbe's first sea duty was aboard the USS Monongahela, the same ship his father served on during the Civil War. In his five years of naval duty, young Tribbe served aboard eight ships including the USS Shubrick, Wilkes, Bainbridge, Prairie, Dixie and Oregon.

"It was a challenging job and I gave it all that I had," Tribbe said. Holding the rank of quartermaster third class, he was sent to Washington, D.C. to be interviewed for the Baily medal, an award for efficiency in his rating.

Tribbe lost out to a friend and shipmate. "I was beat out by a better man, not that I didn't try," said Tribbe. Years later Tribbe found out that his shipmate had remained in the Navy and reached the rank of rear admiral.

Tribbe marveled at the coincidence of serving on the Monongahela after his father had served on her during

the Civil War. "Once, while I was on leave, my dad took me to one of his meetings of Civil War veterans. Some of them had served with my father on the Monongahela. So there I was, telling these men how things were aboard their old Civil War ship."

Tribbe later served aboard the torpedo boat USS Wilkes, named after Rear Adm. Charles Wilkes, an Antarctic explorer and scientist credited with discovery of Wake Island. A ship bearing his name is still in operation. USNS Wilkes, an oceanographic ship, is operated by Military Sealift Command.

Tribbe recalled when President Theodore Roosevelt reviewed a training exercise of a five-ship flotilla off Oyster Bay, Long Island. Tribbe was aboard the USS Bainbridge, one of the Navy's first destroyers.

"Teddy came from Washington to inspect the Atlantic fleet. He was very strong on the Navy and I have always thought of him as an A-number-one man. We sailors loved him for all that he did for the Navy."

But unfortunately the exercise was a near disaster. One of the ships broke a tiller rope, went out of control from the wedge formation and sideswiped three ships. Roosevelt viewed all of this aboard a battleship. When asked by a commanding officer if he wished the exercise to continue, Roosevelt ordered a halt to the proceedings so that the damaged ships could return to shore for repairs.

The Bainbridge was not damaged and in December 1903, when the damaged ships were back in operation, the flotilla sailed for the Canary Islands. It was Tribbe's first transatlantic voyage.

But the Spanish still had bad feelings over losing the war. They would not permit the Americans to come ashore. "The Spanish thought the American sailors would get into trouble. I think the Spanish were right. We would have," Tribbe said.

While on the Bainbridge, Tribbe sustained an injury. "We were out on gunnery practice on the western side of Manila Bay in the Philippines. I

Young Apprentice 2nd Class William Tribbe was in the Navy 14 months when he proudly posed for this studio photograph in April 1902.

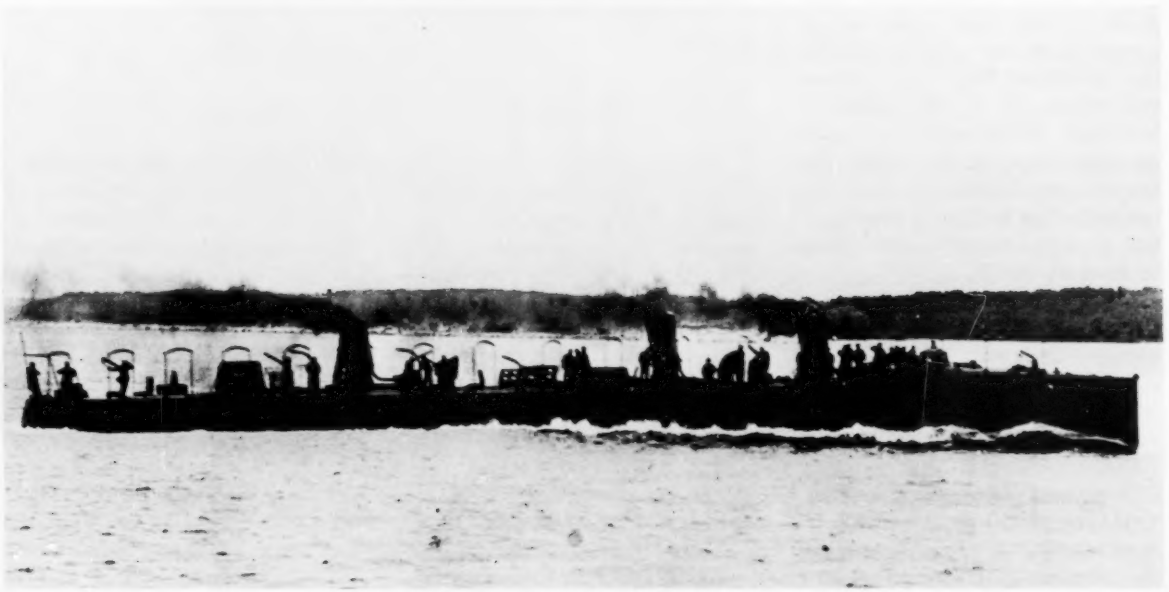
Trainees work aloft on the USS Constellation at Newport, R.I. at the turn of the century. Tribbe trained for six months aboard the vessel.

was caught in a muzzle blast that split my ear drum. The doctor who later examined me said the humming in my ears would go away in a few days. I still have that humming in my ears and I can't walk a straight line to save my life."

On April 6, 1906, Tribbe was scheduled to be separated from the Navy. At four bells on that day he was standing watch at the ship's wheel. He turned to the officer of the deck and requested to be relieved. "Sir, I have completed my tour of the Navy," Tribbe said. The officer replied, "We're out in the middle of the Pacific. Return to your station."

Twenty-five days later his ship reached Hawaii. He received $37 for serving the extra 25 days, including overtime. A sailor's pay then was $1 a day.

Tribbe boarded the battleship USS Oregon for his return to the United States. He was mustered out of the Navy in San Francisco, just one week before the devastating earthquake of 1906 that hit that city. "I read about it



Tribbe learned the rigors of seamanship aboard the torpedo boat USS Wilkes when it hit a reef and damaged a propeller south of Florida.

in the papers back home in St. Louis," Tribbe said.

Tribbe recently made the news when he was awarded a monthly military pension. Had he applied for it when he was first eligible 30 years ago, the Veterans Administration would have paid him nearly $32,000 to date. But Tribbe did not apply until last April because he did not consider himself a veteran.

"I always thought that to be a veteran you had to be in a shooting war," Tribbe said. He learned of the pension accidentally when on the advice of a Veterans Administration representative he applied for disability compensation related to the gunnery accident on the Bainbridge.

Tribbe could not back up his compensation claim because he had long outlived any witnesses to the accident which occurred nearly 75 years ago. But his application prompted a Veterans Administration counselor to discover that Tribbe never had applied for the Spanish-American War veteran's pension.

"I suppose I should be disappointed at missing out on that pension income all these years, but I'm not," Tribbe said. "I've been fortunate in a lot of other ways."

At 92 Tribbe is trim and alert. He exercises every morning, doing stationary runs and arm calisthenics, something he was taught in the Navy. "Those exercises kept me going all these years," Tribbe said.

After spending 16 years as a widower, Tribbe remarried last year. Since he left the Navy he has been steadily employed for 71 years.

Tribbe scoffs at the idea that at 92 he should stop working. He works full time at Project Hope in Los Angeles, as he has for the past 15 years. "I do what I have to do and there is nobody else in the office who can do my kind of accounting work," Tribbe said. Project Hope is a humanitarian organization that provides medical training and assistance in underdeveloped countries throughout the world.

Tribbe smiles when he notes that he was turned down for military service in World War I for "poor eyesight." He was denied an auditor's position with the Internal Revenue Service in 1932 because he was "too old."

Wooden warships may not have survived but at least one of the Navy's iron men is still around. ⚓

Tribbe sailed on the training ship Monongahela in 1902. His father sailed on it for the Union Navy during the Civil War.

MSC Wants Your Ideas

WANTED: Ideas. Can you save money, see something that needs improvement, devise a better way of doing things, reduce paperwork, remove a safety hazard? If so, please write it down, pass it on to your department head or write directly to your employee relations division. It could mean extra dollars for you.

That classified ad has not appeared in any newspaper, but it's 'for real' for all Military Sealift Command employees, especially shipboard personnel who make up the bulk of the command's work force and whose working environment is more hazardous and complicated than that of ashore employees.

President Jimmy Carter has personally met with various Federal officials and followed up with a memorandum to heads of departments and agencies strongly endorsing the government's incentive awards program. His comments apply to MSC as well as other agencies.

"If we are to improve the quality and performance of our government, we must involve all government employees, civilian and military, in that task," President Carter told agency heads.

"We need their determination, their energy, and their ideas to set high standards and see that we meet them. One way to give public employees a greater stake in the government's performance is to recognize those who have made exceptional contributions—especially these days in the crucial area of energy conservation," the President noted.

President Carter indicated that he intends to personally recognize major contributions such as first-year benefits of $5,000 or more "to illustrate the importance I attach to them."

Exceptional contributions in the areas of government reorganization, zero base budgeting, paperwork reduction and regulation reform will receive a letter from the President.

MSC Commander Rear Adm. John D. Johnson also has called for suggestions regarding improving conditions, training and MSC procedures.

"I strongly urge command employees to take part in our beneficial suggestion program. Your ideas in cost, energy and time savings and in safety could mean considerable savings to the command and the government in general. You could benefit from your ideas in both financial awards and in the knowledge that you have made a special contribution to the well-being of the government and your fellow employees," Admiral Johnson said.

Every ship operated by Civil Service employees or having military technicians or crewmen should have an incentive award box with suggestion forms and a slot to put them in. If forms are not available they can be obtained from the purser.

Suggestions can be forwarded to the department head and ship master or sent directly to the employee relations division, code 23, at either MSC, Pacific or MSC, Atlantic.

Suggestion awards fall into three major categories: tangible or cost savings to the government; intangible benefits such as safety, improved method or morale, or special achievements by a group or by an individual who handles special projects in an outstanding manner.

The minimum cash award for each category is $25 and the maximum is $25,000. The minimum is paid for ideas that save $250 or for a limited intangible benefit.

If savings are $100,000 or more, a $1,200 cash award is paid for the first $100,000 saved plus $5 for each additional $5,000. Awards exceeding $5,000 may be paid employees for ideas that are of exceptional value and have general application.

Examples might be adoption of a new policy or a major procedure, or a substantial improvement in the quality of critical equipment, activity, program or public service.

In the last fiscal year, 16 MSC employees earned cash awards totaling $4,255 and saved or benefited the government in the amount of $53,223. MSC, Pacific employees topped the list. Thirteen earned $3,360 in awards for benefiting or saving the government $34,593.

Greater emphasis is being given the tapping of employee expertise by Admiral Johnson. In recent months he has used several forums and occasions to encourage MSC employees to submit ideas that will improve command operations and working environments. He particularly has stressed the need to take advantage of the skills of seagoing employees.

"I feel that our Civil Service mariners may be in the best position to contribute ideas that could benefit themselves, their fellow mariners, the ship, MSC and perhaps the entire U.S. Government," Admiral Johnson said. ⚓

Life Aboard a Houseboat

By Linda M. Quinones

Most Military Sealift Command employees who head for their homes in suburbia at the end of a work day are anxious to escape the congestion and noise of the city. Lt. Cmdr. Katherine Laughton is among them, but her home is a gold and white 50-foot fiberglass houseboat rather than a suburban house or apartment.

Commander Laughton, deputy director of the command information systems office, and her husband, Robert, live aboard the Rough House II berthed at the Tantallon Yacht Club in Oxon Hill, Md.

Laughton says living on the water is invigorating and peaceful, but adds that it is definitely not for those unwilling to reorder their lives and adjust to occasional inconveniences.

"Living on the houseboat has greatly changed my lifestyle and attitudes about many things," Laughton said. "By necessity, I entertain a lot more informally, and only small groups of people. I also have become more environmentally conscious and have found nature to be a continuous source of entertainment."

Laughton and her husband, a retired Navy commander, sailed Rough House II from Pensacola, Fla. to Maryland when she was transferred to MSC headquarters last September.

"The trip was the longest cruise we had taken the boat on since we bought it in June 1975, about 1,800 miles, of which nearly 200 were in open water. It took us 27 days, but we lost four days when heavy seas forced us to put into Carabelle, Fla."

Laughton held a variety of interesting positions before joining the MSC staff.

Commissioned in 1965, she had recruiting duty in Kansas City, Mo. from 1968 until 1970. "It was especially difficult around the time of the Kent State University student riots. Questions from prospective recruits challenged everything I had ever thought about. But, it was rewarding duty because it made me more aware of the relationship between the civilian and military communities."

She next worked for the Naval Intelligence foreign attache affairs and protocol office. "Dealing with the diplomatic community was fascinating. I met so many interesting people."

While there she met such VIPs as then Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird. Laughton planned a dinner held in his honor at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. as well as numerous tours for foreign Navy visitors.

In 1974 she went to work for Naval Education and Training in Pensacola, Fla. and earned a Navy Commendation Medal for development of automated management information systems.

Laughton joined the MSC staff in September as assistant director of the MSC sealift integrated systems office at the Washington Navy Yard. She took over her present position in December.

Rough House II is the second houseboat Laughton has lived aboard. The first was a used 40-foot craft purchased while she was working at the Pentagon. The first Rough House was berthed at the Fort Washington Marina also in Oxon Hill.

A native of La Jolla, Calif., Laughton began sailing as a teenager and developed a love for the water. Her husband also is a boating enthusiast. Laughton said that they both hoped to own a boat but really didn't intend to live aboard one.

The Laughtons kept both the 40-foot houseboat and a more conventional home in Alexandria, Va. for a while, but spent more and more time on the boat. "It meant double housework and the bother of carrying things back and forth, so we finally took up permanent residence on the houseboat."

After sailing Rough House to Pensacola, Fla., the Laughtons started hunting for a larger boat. They saw several 50-foot houseboats similar to Rough House II at a boat show, decided on a size and design that would best suit their needs and placed an order.

The old boat was loaded aboard the flatbed truck right after the new one was delivered so the Laughtons were not without a home for even a day.

Carl Gibson designed Rough House II which was built in Tennessee, modifying a standard 50-foot boat to accommodate a washer and dryer, library, and an additional head for the guest cabin. A flying bridge also was added to Rough House II which has twin 270 horsepower gasoline engines. The houseboat sleeps eight people and is both heated and air conditioned. Cruising speed is 10 knots, but it can reach a top speed of 24 knots.

"Many people are surprised to learn that a houseboat can attain such a high speed, but it is not uncommon for one that has a planing hull such as Rough House II. That is if the bottom is not fouled and the boat is not weighted down with furnishings, as ours is."

Laughton has done much to make Rough House II a comfortable

home. However, she is quick to point out that there are advantages and disadvantages to owning a houseboat, especially if you live aboard it.

"Everything I've read about buying a boat warns those who have never owned a boat against buying a houseboat. We didn't take that advice and bought a houseboat the first time around. Luckily, in our case, the advantages outweighed the disadvantages.

"A major disadvantage is the amount of work and expense involved in keeping it up. My husband does most of the work himself since he is home during the day. But, someone who is not able to devote a great deal of time to keeping it in shape would find it very expensive to maintain. A houseboat's electrical systems, for example, are not easy to repair.

"A houseboat also is difficult to cruise. It is very much affected by wind because of its large amount of sail area, and can really challenge you as we learned on our trip to Maryland.

"The weather can also be a bother at times despite the heaters and air conditioners. The boat just isn't as well insulated as a house. Telephone service also can be a problem."

An advantage of living on a houseboat, Laughton said, is the close sense of community she and her husband share with the other 16 "live aboard" families at the Tantallon Yacht Club. "Boaters are the friendliest people I've ever met. We share common problems, talk them over together, and help each other.

"Mobility is another advantage. We usually take the boat out every weekend. Whenever we are in the mood to go fishing, we just start the engines and take off."

Laughton's husband now is captain of the yacht club and is busy planning cruises for the summer and fall. "One we are especially looking forward to is a 12-day cruise to North Carolina in August. About 16 boats will take part in that trip.

"There are also many other pleasures of living on a houseboat. Watching the swans and ducks and just being outdoors are some."

Laughton is not certain that she would buy another new houseboat, mainly because she feels the quality of boats now being built is not as good as it was even several years ago.

"I am happy with this one and intend to continue making it my home as long as possible. That is, until something happens to change my mind." ⚓

Commander Laughton and her husband sail Rough House II from Pensacola, Fla. to Maryland, a 27-day voyage of about 1,800 miles.

Cmdr. William G. McHenry, commanding officer of the MSC office at Subic Bay chats with two youngsters of the Gordon Heights Elementary School in Olongapo City. The boys are trying out two of the 80 new desks donated to the school by MSC office employees and crew members of MSC fleet support oilers USNS Navasota and Mispillion.

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